

REMARKS

The present application was filed on June 21, 2001 with claims 1-29. Claims 2, 11, 13, 20 and 29 have been canceled. Claims 1, 3-10, 12, 14-19 and 21-28 remain pending. Claims 1, 12 and 19 are the pending independent claims.

In the outstanding final Office Action dated March 8, 2006, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-10, 12, 14-19 and 21-28 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,678,719 (hereinafter "Stimmel"). Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the following remarks.

Independent claim 1 of the present invention recites a method for use in a collaborative system. A plurality of participants in a group are set up to collaboratively communicate. Presence information of each of the participants in the group is automatically collected. The presence information is determined by the collaborative system through system monitored communicative actions associated with each participant. A visual representation is dynamically displayed having a plurality of display windows. The plurality of display windows includes at least the participants, the collected presence information and a set of mechanisms for a participant to use in conjunction with the displayed presence information to initiate a prescribed mode of communicating with one or more others of the participants in the group for a particular collaborative purpose. The displayed presence information and at least one mechanism of the set of mechanisms is employed to initiate communication with one or more other participants in the group. At least one of the mechanisms includes setting up one or more third party calls to initiate communication with one or more other participants in the group for the particular collaborative purpose. Independent claims 12 and 19 recite additional embodiments of the present invention having similar limitations.

Stimmel discloses a virtual workplace intercommunication tool. As disclosed in column 4, lines 38-60 of Stimmel, a user's status information such as "Do not disturb," "Away from desk," and "Out of the office," is established or changed by that user. In response to arguments previously set forth by Applicants, the Examiner contends that in Stimmel, the assignment of a status by a given user is a communicative action and status is determined by the system through the given user's status choice. Applicants assert that the system of Stimmel does not determine the status of a user. No such determination is necessary since the status has been specifically chosen by the user.

Additionally, in Stimmel a user's status is updated when that user changes his/her status. Thus, Applicants assert that user status is not automatically collected by the system for each user. Therefore, Stimmel fails to disclose an automatic collection of presence information for each participant in the group, wherein the presence information is determined by the collaborative system through system monitored communicative actions associated with each participant, as recited in the independent claims of the present invention.

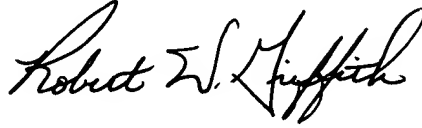
Stimmel also discloses a set of communication actions that are chosen by the user. The user may enter information associated with each communication action, such as an email address or phone number. However, Stimmel fails to disclose that these communication actions are used in conjunction with the status of the user. Stimmel also fails to disclose that these communication actions are used to initiate a prescribed mode of communication with other users in a specified group of users. Therefore, Stimmel fails to disclose the dynamic display of a set of mechanisms for a participant to use in conjunction with the displayed presence information to initiate a prescribed mode of communicating with one or more others of said participants in said group for a particular collaborative purpose, as recited in the independent claims of the present invention.

Finally, while Stimmel discloses a communication window that includes the communication actions for contacting the user, which may include for example, an email address or phone number, Stimmel fails to disclose that such communication actions may be utilized through the communication window to contact the user. Therefore, Stimmel fails to disclose that displayed presence information and a mechanism are employed to initiate communication with other users in a specified group, as recited in the independent claims of the present invention.

Applicants assert that dependent claims 3-10, 14-18 and 21-28 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency from independent claims 1, 12 and 19. Dependent claims 3-10, 14-18 and 21-28 also recite patentable subject matter in their own right.

In view of the above, Applicants believe that claims 1, 3-10, 12, 14-19 and 21-28 are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request withdrawal of the §102(e) rejection.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Griffith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" and last name "Griffith" clearly distinguishable.

Date: May 8, 2006

Robert W. Griffith
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Reg. No. 48,956
Ryan, Mason & Lewis, LLP
90 Forest Avenue
Locust Valley, NY 11560
(516) 759-4547